NAQCC News

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1. SPRINT: Our sprint is this Wednesday evening, May 21st at 8:30-10:30 PM EDT (Thursday 0030-0230Z).

This month marks the debut of our new time zone divisions. We are dividing our SWA category into 4 divisions - Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific to try to level the playing field for our Western members. We are now awarding a certificate to the top score from each time zone. This means in effect that hams in each time zone effectively only compete against others in the same time zone. We are hoping this encourages our Western members to be more active in our sprints despite the early time frame out there. We'll see how it works the next few months on a trial basis.

Incidentally in the recent W7 QSO Party, I worked stations from all of the W7 states on 40M using just 930 mW and most of the QSO's were in the same time frame as our sprints, so it is definitely not too early for E-W coast propagation on 40M in our sprints. One AZ QSO even came in the 2100Z hour.

Our new time zone divisions means we are eliminating our current 2nd place and Top Non-Winner certificates as of this month. We will continue our Special Award though. However it will now be based on a drawing among the 4 SWA time zone division entrants (and GAIN category entrants if we have any). The top qualifier from each will go into a drawing and the winner will get the certificate. This month's special award is for working the most different call areas in the USA (maximum 10).

Let's get out there now and see if we can break more records for participation this month as we have done the previous two months. I'd love to have to process at least 70 logs this month. That would be a great birthday present for me (May 24th) and Tom (May 18th), and would make an even stronger pro-CW statement which is what we are all about at the NAQCC.

There are the usual prizes and certificates topped off by our monthly giveaway of the CW

books on CD donated by Chuck K7QO. Chuck is currently giving away one CD to the high scorer who hasn't won a CD before. Club officers are not eligible.

If you're entering one of our sprints for the first time, we welcome you and hope you will be a regular participant from now on. Last month we welcomed W3TS, AD5VC, K3HPS, K4PQC, WD5INA, N1PQ, NV9X, WK8S, KC2MHU, N1QLL, AA8XX, N8ZYA, KI6OFN as first time participants and/or log submitters.

Remember this is only a brief overview of the coming sprint. Be sure to read and understand the full general sprint rules and any specific rules for this month's sprint here.

2. APRIL CHALLENGE RESULTS: If you don't enter our challenges, you probably don't read the soapbox comments in the results and don't know how enjoyable the challenges are. So... I'm going to reprint a couple comments culled from the April soapbox here.

KC2LYQ - I had a great time completing this challenge. This is my first time working on an NAQCC challenge, and it definitely won't be my last..... and it was one of the best amateur radio experiences I've had so far in my four years of being licensed.

VE3HUR - I'm glad Mike (KC2LYQ) enjoyed this challenge so much. I wish more members would participate and discover for themselves just how worthwhile the challenges can be. Wouldn't it be fun to see what John does if 2000+ members decided to send in entries some month?

KC2EGL - (The idea of the monthly challenges is simply brilliant.) I am enjoying the NAQCC challenges more and more each month. They have me sitting at my rig more often, trying to make QSO's.....I am looking foward to May's mW challenge.

Once again we hit double digits in the number of entrants (13) for our challenges, continuing a streak we started in the fall. Now I'm looking forward to the next step upward as our challenges increase in popularity. I'd love to process, not 2000+ as Don suggests, but at least a couple dozen or more entries each of the next few months, and then move on upward from there. That will definitely increase the CW presence on the ham bands.

We have another giveaway coming up in our August Challenge - a book of ham radio cartoons ("N0UJR and His Friends" by Greg Trook) donated by Paul N8XMS. And logically, it will be an alphabet challenge involving cartoon character names. Rules will be posted shortly if they are not already there by the time you get this newsletter.

Three members maxxed out on the April challenge, using 63 distinct calls for the 63 letters of the challenge. KC2LYQ, K3WWP, and K4PBY will get a certificate for their accomplishments. All our other participants also did very well in completing those tricky names from Shakespeare's plays. Thanks to Don VE3HUR for suggesting this challenge. The bug/paddle handles donated by Gregg WB8LZG went to KH6OZ in a drawing conducted by Gregg among those satisfying the challenge.

2a. JUNE CHALLENGE: - Because this is a combined issue (see General Club News below), we are also including a 'promo' for our June challenges here. Yes, challenges is not a typo, we are having two challenges in June. Our annual FD challenge has been very popular, and is continuing this year. We promised at one point to have challenges that involved the whole month, so we are having a second June challenge that qualifies. It's simply to see how many

NAQCC members you can work during the month.

Those who qualify for a Participation point in either or both challenges as described in the rules will go into a drawing for the bug/paddle handles donated by Gregg WB8LZG. You can see examples of the handles on Gregg's web site.

Full challenge info including my tutorial/work sheet for our alphabet style challenges here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS: - This is the first of a couple combined issues of our newsletter this year. Because of the innovative scheduling of our sprints, it sometimes happens that the sprint newsletter and the end of the month newsletter come just one week apart. That just involves too much work in too short a time for everyone involved in putting out the newsletter. So whenever the two issues would come just a week apart, we are eliminating the end of month issue and combining the material that would go into that issue with that of the sprint issue.

- We're pleased to announce that the NAQCC will be setting up a table again this year at the Butler, PA hamfest on Sunday, June 1st. We'd love to see as many NAQCC members as possible drop by and say hello if you will be going to the hamfest. Club President Tom WY3H, Vice President John K3WWP, Mike KC2EGL, and possibly others will be manning the table. If you'd be interested in manning the table for an hour or so, let us know via **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** Directions to and info about the hamfest can be found at http://www.breezeshooters.net/hamfest08.pdf.

- (by Tom, WY3H repeated from the last newsletter) Guess what's coming in June besides the first day of summer?

That's right, Field Day!

Anyone living in or near western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, southwestern NY, or northern W Va. (oh heck, anywhere for that matter) is welcome to sign up for the first NAQCC QRP Field Day.

Providing we can get enough operators signing up we will hold the event on my property in Armstrong County (western) Pennsylvania. The event will be strictly primitive -- a porta-potty and primitive camping -- battery power (a generator if someone brings one). There are trees to string random wire or dipoles -- whatever. Somewhat rough access to property but not that difficult. Any takers?

For details e-mail Tom, WY3H, NAQCC 0001, at: **TJMITCHELLKX3@COMCAST.NET**

Please reply by May 31 at the latest.

NOTE: So far, only Karl N3IJR has shown any interest. Thanks Karl.

- Only about a month to go now in our annual Spring Ragchew Award for 2008. We hope you are racking up the ragchews on the bands. With the improving conditions of late, it is becoming easier to hold onto a QSO for the required minimum of 30 minutes and even quite a bit longer. This Award is ideal for those who don't like the fast paced action of contests, and just like to talk with their fellow hams. Check out the rules in the Awards section of the web site.

- Please note that the rules for the awarding of certificates for the May Challenge have been amended. Instead of only the two hams making the most milliwatt QSO's getting a certificate, now anyone making 10 or more milliwatt QSO's will be so awarded. See the May challenge rules for more specifics.

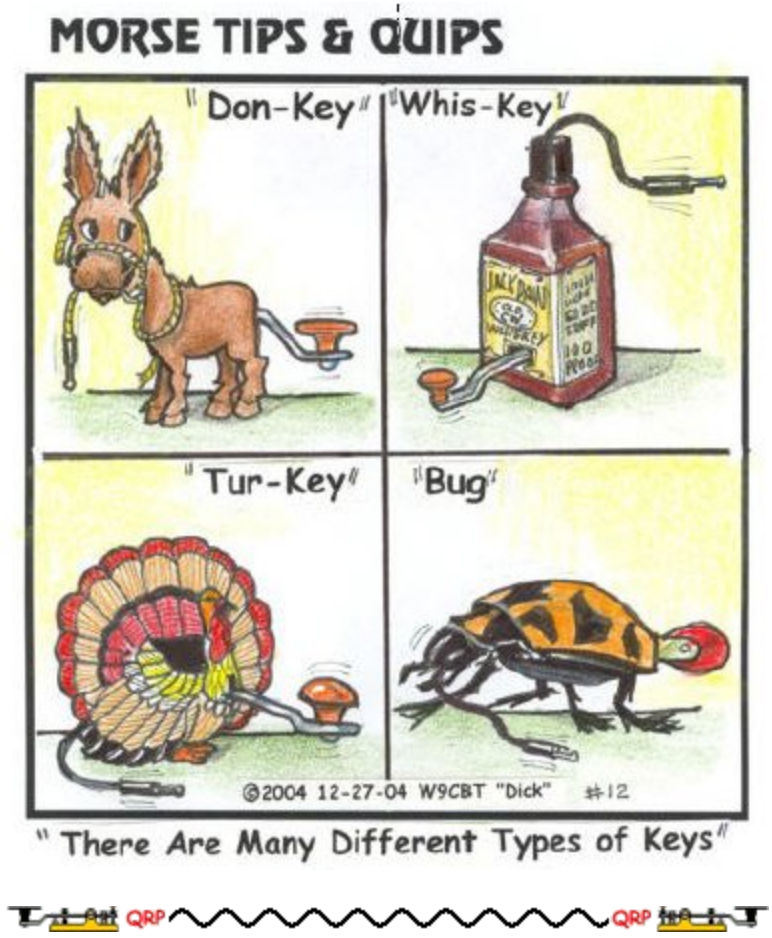
- A million thanks and deepest appreciation go to our member Bruce, WY7N. Bruce donated a plaque in the name of the NAQCC to go to the top Single-op QRP scorer in the recent 7th Call Area QSO Party. What a wonderful idea and a magnificent gesture to help publicize the club! Here is an excerpt from the email Bruce sent to the QSO Party organizers explaining his reason for doing so - "It's because of NAQCC that I'm active again in Ham Radio. I'm having tons of fun! I'm as excited about Ham Radio as ever!"

- We now have pictures of 83 of our members in our picture gallery, and I must say it looks very nice, and really adds a personal touch to our fine club. Is your picture there? No? Why not? You don't know how to submit one to us? Hey, it's simple. Just email a digital photo of yourself where your face is a decent size, i.e. about 120 x 120 pixels for the face part of the picture. The whole picture can be as big as you want. In fact to a certain extent, the bigger the better, since a large picture will resize downward nicely, while a small picture will become blurry if it is resized upward too far. Where do you email it? To **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET**. Just type that email address into an email, attach the photo and send it.

- Club member Lee WA8QFE writes in part, "One item you may try to influence others on, is joining LoTW. I think you (K3WWP) and I are ones of a small number. I have more confirmations from you than USA stations in general. They may be amazed at the QSL's waiting there and in eQSL."

I do think that most every ham who wants to get QSO's verified in this day and age should join either or both LotW and eQSL. There is still nothing like regular paper QSL's, but they are rapidly becoming less and less of a presence in ham radio because of rising postal rates as well as the ease of getting QSO's verified electronically. It is so very easy to use both LotW and eQSL, that I have all my QSO's uploaded to both at the end of each month. You can read more of my (K3WWP) thoughts about electronic QSL's in the entries for May 8 and 9 in the diary on my web site at k3wwp.com/.

4. CW CARTOON OF THE MONTH: Let's take a comedy break now courtesy of Dick Sylvan W9CBT. Dick has been a long-time QRP/CW operator. One of his many talents is being a cartoon artist, and he is supplying a cartoon each month for the newsletter. The NAQCC is very honored to become the third organization to feature Dick's cartoons in their publications. Dick's cartoons appear monthly in The K9YA Telegraph, an on-line only Ham Radio E-zine and also in RadCom Magazine, the British Ham Radio publication. Dick has also authored a book entitled "Hi Hi - A Collection of Ham Radio Cartoons" available via his web site at http://www.k9ya.org/w9cbt/. A new cartoon will be appearing in each of our even-numbered newsletters.



5. MEMBER NEWS: Send your news items to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**.

- **From Ed PY4WAS #2364 -** We would appreciate if you could announce the 2008 MMAA CW Contest (This Weekend!) between radioamateurs in your country and other North America hams. For more information , please visit our web site: MMAA CW Contest.

Here are pictures of the Plates of the Champions (QRP Station - North America and South America) awarded to winners of the Manchester Mineira All America CW Contest / 2007.

- **From Walt KD8IGC #2326 -** I have been a ham since the very early 80s. During the 80s I was very active with CW, almost exclusively, from Biloxi Mississippi and for 3 years Guam. After returning to the states I fell out of the hobby. I'm now getting back into the hobby via QRP and a straight key. I will be picking up a K1 at the Hamvention. I am thinking about the following bands: 40, 30, 20 and15. What are your thought on these bands for low power use? Another question I have is this. I will be getting the antenna tuner accessory board for the K1. Would you cut a dipole antenna for 40 and let the tuner do its thing for the other bands or would it be better to make a longer dipole and let the tuner do its thing for all of the bands? Is there any power loss considerations to either approach using the tuner? I will check back in with follow ups on the radio construction and shack setup. Thanks for your help.

- **From Larry W9CC #0183 -** I do a lot of American Morse as well as CW. I understand John (K3WWP) does a bit of Morse as well. He thought this might be an item of interest. Every year the members of the Morse Telegraph Club hold and event to celebrate Sam Morse's birthday. Telegraph lines used to be given to the MTC every year by Western Union. Today we use both telephone lines and the internet. We used both from Terre Haute, IN, this year. It was a first for the Terre Haute Chapter of the MTC. I love copying by sounder rather than by tones. We run between 15 and 35 WPM. It is pure fun!

From the Terre Haute News, Terre Haute, Indiana: Telegraphers celebrate Samuel Morse's birthday. A train rambled north on tracks beside the Clee J. Spague Memorial Platform as Bill Foster and Dave Mason tried to guess its length. "A mile?" Mason guessed. The sender says:

To read the rest of the story, go to Morse Story .

- **From John N6HI #642 -** I have photo-documented the construction of the Oak Hills Research WM-2 QRP Wattmeter, and placed it on the N6HI website for "newby" kit builders as an example of the process of construction of a typical electronic kit. Readers of the NAQCC Newsletter may find it useful. Please feel free to note this for your readers. Please ask that readers link to: The Joy of Kit Building. ... then click on "The Joy of Kit Building"

- **From Dick N2UGB #1565 -** I was recently reflecting on our chosen form of amateur radio, essentially QRP cw and how we are, sometimes, criticised by QRO hams as being inconsiderate operators by putting out signals weaker than those of the KW crowd. I thought about that charge recently and reflected on how much "short-wave" radio has changed over the years. And communications in general, and what is demanded by so many in 2008. In effect, crystal clear communications, seven days a week, year 'round. I thought of my days as an swl in the early 1950's. What a thrill it was to pull a multi-KW SW BC station out of the noise and QSB. I imagine the amateurs of that time felt the same about a two-way contact, DX or state-side.

Today, if the signal isn't 40 db over S9, it is to be devoutly ignored, not by all but by many. Especially many of those who have matured or are maturing in these days of cell-phones, internet radio, and internet phone calls. That same level of signal strength and purity is, frequently, expected on the amateur bands.

Well, I will continue to continue my QRP efforts, despite lack of a proper QRP antenna which is definitely a disadvantage, and an S9 signal. And, despite coming up with an empty creel from time-to-time. I hope other QRP operators will also do likewise. I also hope we will listen for each other on or near the QRP calling frequencies. And on all the frequencies available to us. And, practice what we preach. Answering the CQ of a weaker signal.

I might just be a QRP operator sending that CQ.

- **From John N8ZYA #2279 -** My trip to the Outer Banks of North Carolina last week was my second activity from the "edge of the pond" this year. (My first was from the New York City area where I worked Spain and Italy) I was near the beach at Nags Head and operating from the balcony of a rental home. I found it easy to work Puerto Rico (KP4DKE) and Cuba (CO8LY) with a simple wire antenna and 5 watts of power.

This was my first use of a G5RV antenna and I heard a lot of Spanish speaking stations in the Caribbean. Because of length restrictions, I couldn't properly orient the antenna towards Europe and besides, 20 meters, was hardly active last week. (Sometimes it's there...and sometimes it's not) I had hoped for the Eastern-Western direction but with a solar flux in the low to mid 60's, I was happy to work these two guys on 40 meters.

I also had a great QSO with fellow NAQCC member, N1LT, who was running 4 watts from his location in Laconia, New Hampshire. Despite more distant contacts, QRP X QRP contacts are always the best and most challenging. (This was my most prized catch on the sea)

In the mornings, I was able to check into the Navy Amateur Radio net on 7245. A lot of these guys are in the Georgia and Florida area, and with me running QRP, sometimes it's difficult to check in from West Virginia.

As I was sitting on the balcony, near my last day at the beach, exchanging the essentials with a station at Pocona Summit, PA (WB2KKI), the rain started to heavily fall. I had to break down the radio, key, and battery and run inside to dry ground.

I was able to break down, and reconnect everything, from inside, in about 10 minutes. I sent my call sign again and Mike answered immediately. We continued the QSO for almost half an hour laughing about QRP and the weather.

Then the tornado moved in.....It crossed the inlet about 10 miles below us, without any damage. I'm now glad to be back in the mountains.

I see no reason to ever run more than 5 watts QRP with a simple wire antenna. The G5RV gave me the option of operating on all bands and the scenery outside was wonderful.

I much prefer my radio shack in the great outdoors!

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** In response to W9CC's item above, yes I have used and enjoyed American Morse, but it's been a while now. I never was good at copying on a sounder, but using tones similar to how we copy International Morse, I was quite good at it at one time. A couple of good friends (Sue W9KSE and Bob W1AFM-W1HV), both SK's now and I used it quite a bit back in the 1960's. I remember those times very well and the fun it was. Incidentally the first Morse message was sent exactly 101 years to the day before I was born - May 24, 1844. If you're intrigued by American Morse and want to hear what it sounds like, both with tones and on a simulated sounder, a program called 'The Mill' by Jim W4FOK can do both. See http://home.comcast.net/~w4fok/ (--.. ...-. -.. . -.- ...-. .-- .-- .....)

Also I'm delighted to read the comments about the effectiveness of QRP/CW. Of course I've known that for years, but it's good to hear others talking about it and confirming my views.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless they specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.